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Application No. 09/707,926

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) [[Method]] A method for processing a print job by at least a first and a second print shop which are geographically distributed whereby:

[[a]] said print shops are connected via a computer network;

[[b]] each print shop forwards a production schedule to a central repository connected to said computer network, said production schedule comprising data allowing a [[graphical]] representation of the respective production schedule at said print shops;

[[c]] said first print shop lacking sufficient printing capacity for processing said print job accesses the production schedule of said second print shop via said central repository;

[[d]] said first print shop displays the production schedule of said second print shop accessed from said central repository; and

[[e]] said first print shop transfers at least part of said print job to said second print shop, if spare printing capacity is indicated in the [[displayed]] production schedule of said second print shop displayed at said first print shop;

wherein said first and second print shops effect the transfer of the at least part of the print job independent of any centralized scheduling application while each print shop may operate a scheduling application of its choosing.

2. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method according to claim 1, wherein said production schedule data, which are suitable for a storage in the central repository, are created as a digitized photograph from a hard copy of the production schedule.

3. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method according to claim 1, wherein said production schedule data, which are suitable for a storage in the central repository, are created by a computer-aided scheduling tool.

4. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method according to claim 1 [[1]].

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Application No. 09/707,926

wherein the production schedule is delivered from the central repository to the first print shop only in ~~[[case]]~~ cases that the first print shop satisfies access conditions which are defined by ~~[[the second print shop]]~~ the plurality of print shops.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method according to claim ~~7~~ [[1]], wherein the said first print shop only displays production schedules of ~~[[second]]~~ the plurality of print shops which are located within a pre-defined geographical region.

6. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method according to claim ~~7~~ [[1]], wherein the said first print shop only displays production schedules of ~~[[second]]~~ the plurality of print shops which belong to a pre-defined group of preferred print shops.

7. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein said second print shop comprises a plurality of print shops connected via said computer network with said first print shop.

8. (New) The method according to claim 7, wherein some of the plurality of print shops forward multiple representations of their production schedules at different levels of detail to said central repository.

9. (New) A method for processing a print job with geographically distributed print shops, comprising:

coupling a first set of print shops, a second set print shops, and a central repository via a network; the first set of print shops having one print shop and the second set of print shops having a plurality of print shops;

sending to the central repository a production schedule representative of at least one print shop in the second set of print shops with access controls that allow visibility of its production schedule to include the print shop in the first set of print shops; each production schedule sent by a print shop comprising data allowing a representation of the respective production schedule;

retrieving, at the print shop in the first set of print shops from the central repository via the network when the print shop in the first set of print shops lacks sufficient printing capacity for processing the print job, the production schedules of print shops in the second set of print shops having access controls that permit visibility of their production schedules to the print shop in the first set of print shops; and

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Application No. 09/707,926

transferring, from the print shop in the first set of print shops to at least one print shop in the second set of print shops via the network, at least part of the print job when spare printing capacity is indicated in at least one retrieved production schedule of the second set of print shops;

wherein the print shop in the first set of print shops and the at least one print shop in the second set of print shops effect the transfer of the at least part of the print job independent of any centralized scheduling application while each print shop may operate a scheduling application of its choosing.

10. (New) The method according to claim 9, wherein the print shop in the first set of print shops displays the production schedules of the second set of print shops retrieved from the central repository.

11. (New) The method according to claim 10, wherein each of the print shops in the second set of print shops sends its respective production schedule to the central repository.

12. (New) The method according to claim 11, wherein the network is a computer network.

13. (New) The method according to claim 10, wherein at least some of the production schedules of the print shops in the second set of print shops are created from a digitized photograph of a hard copy rendering of their production schedules.

14. (New) The method according to claim 9, further comprising limiting the production schedules of the print shops in the second set of print shops retrieved by the print shop in the first set of print shops from the central repository as a function of geographical location of the print shop in the first set of print shops and the print shops in the second set of print shops.

15. (New) The method according to claim 9, further comprising limiting the production schedules of print shops in the second set of print shops retrieved by the print shop in the first set of print shops from the central repository as a function of a user profile attached to the print shop in the first set of print shops.

16. (New) The method according to claim 15, wherein the user profile of the print shop in the first set of print shops defines a set of preferred print shops from the second set of print shops.

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Application No. 09/707,926

17. (New) A method for processing a print job with geographically distributed print shops, comprising:

coupling a plurality of print shops and a central repository via a network;

sending production schedules from ones of the plurality of print shops to the central repository; each production schedule sent by a print shop comprising data allowing a representation of the respective production schedule;

accessing, from a first of the plurality of print shops at the central repository, the production schedules of other of the plurality of print shops when the first print shop lacks sufficient printing capacity for processing the print job;

filtering the production schedules of the other of the plurality of print shops accessed by first of the plurality of print shops from the central repository as a function of geographical location of the first of the plurality of print shops relative the other of the plurality of print shops;

displaying, at the first of the plurality of print shops, the production schedules remaining after filtering those production schedules satisfying the geographical location limitation; and

transferring from the first of the plurality of print shops to at least one of the other of the plurality of print shops, at least part of the print job when spare printing capacity is indicated in the production schedule of the at least one of the other of the plurality of print shops;

wherein the first of the plurality of print shops and the at least one of the other of the plurality of print shops effect the transfer of the at least part of the print job independent of any centralized scheduling application while each print shop may operate a scheduling application of its choosing.

18. (New) The method according to claim 17, further comprising filtering the production schedules of the other of the plurality of print shops accessed by first of the plurality of print shops from the central repository as a function of a preferred set of print shops defined by the other of the plurality of print shops.

19. (New) The method according to claim 17, wherein the production schedules displayed at the first of the plurality of print shops is graphically

Application No. 09/707,926

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represent d.

20. (New) The method according to claim 17, wherein the production schedules displayed at the first of the plurality of print shops is created from a digitized photograph of a hard copy rendering of the production schedules.